

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1491

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ISLAMABAD 8769

EXDIS

DEPARTMENT REPEAT OTHER POSTS AS DESIRED

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: XX

SUBJ: PRIMIN BHUTTO ON MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

SUMMARY. BHUTTO SPECULATES THAT SOVIETS MUST HAVE KNOWN IN ADVANCE OF EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN PLANS TO ATTACK ISRAEL, AND THAT THEY ACQUIESCED IN SUCH PLANS. INDICATING SKEPTICISM OVER ARAB CAPABILITIES, HE HOPES THAT OUT OF CURRENT FIGHTING THERE WILL COME IMPROVED CHANCE OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAEL. HE BELIEVES USG HAS "OPPORTUNITY" TO PROMOTE SUCH OUTCOME AND URGES US TO "PLAY IT COOL." HE SEES UNSC RES 242 AS STILL PROVIDING BASIS FOR JUST SETTLEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRIMIN BHUTTO ASKED ME TO CALL ON HIM EARLY EVENING OCTOBER 9. THIS MESSAGE SUMMARIZES CONVERSATION ON MIDDLE EAST CRISIS; OTHER SUBJECTS COVERED DURING ONE AND ONE-HALF HOUR MEETING BY SEPTELS.

2. BHUTTO OPENED BY ASKING ABOUT SITUATION ON EGYPTIAN AND SYRIAN FIGHTING FRONTS, STATING THAT GOP SOURCES WERE OF LIMITED VALUE. I GAVE HIM SELECTIVE SUMMARY OF SITUATION AS I UNDERSTOOD IT FROM SITREPS WE HAVE BEEN RECEIVING. I SAID FIGHTING MIGHT NOW POSSIBLY BE NEARING
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CRUCIAL STAGE AS ISRAELIS COMPLETED MOBILIZATION AND PREPARED TO COUNTER-ATTACK WITH FULL FORCE AT THEIR DISPOSAL. I NOTED THAT BOTH EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS HAD HAD INITIAL SUCCESSES BUT OPINED THAT SITUATION WAS FAR

FROM ONE-SIDED PICTURE BEING PAINTED BY PAK PRESS AND RADIO, I.E., THAT EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS WERE SEVERELY CLOBBERING "ISRAELI AGGRESSORS." BHUTTO REMARKED THAT HE HAD HAD LENGTHY CABINET MEETING ON MIDDLE EAST CRISIS EARLIER THAT DAY AND THAT, IN ATTEMPTING TO PRESENT SITUATION OBJECTIVELY, HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN CONSIDERED BY SOME OF HIS MINISTERS AS BEING PRO-ISRAEL; HE DEPLORED LOCAL TENDENCY TO ONE-SIDED (PRO-ARAB) ACCOUNTS, DESPITE DEEP PRO-ARAB FEELING IN PAKISTAN.

3. BHUTTO ASKED WHETHER WE HAD HAD ANY ADVANCE WARNING. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD ISRAELIS HAD TOLD US, SOME HOURS BEFORE FIGHTING BROKE OUT, OF INDICATIONS THEY HAD OF ARAB BUILD-UP AND OF ISRAELIS' ANTICIPATION THAT ATTACK WAS IMMINENT. I ADDED THAT WE HAD UNDERTAKEN IMMEDIATE DIPLOMATIC EFFORT TO FORESTALL HOSTILITIES BUT WITHOUT SUCCESS. AS TO WHO HAD FIRED FIRST SHELL, I NOTED UN SOURCES HAD INDICATED ISRAELIS WERE ON RECEIVING END. BHUTTO VOLUNTEERED HIS BELIEF THAT EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS HAD BEGUN THE FIGHT; BUT THAT THEY COULD NOT PROPERLY BE TERMED "AGGRESSORS" OR "INVADERS" IN VIEW OF FACT THEY WERE SEEKING TO RECAPTURE THEIR OWN LAND OCCUPIED BY ISRAELIS.

4. BHUTTO ASKED WHAT US WANTED OUT OF THE FIGHTING. I SAID ANSWER SEEMED FAIRLY SIMPLE TO ME ALTHOUGH PROBLEM WAS NOT ONLY COMPLEX BUT DIFFICULT: CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES AND BEYOND THAT, MUTUAL SETTLEMENT AND PEACE BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAELIS. I SAID I HAD IMPRESSION WE WERE NOT MAKING MUCH OF A POINT OF FACT THAT THIS ROUND OF FIGHTING HAD BEEN BEGUN BY ARAB SIDE; IMPORTANT THING WAS TO CONTAIN SITUATION AND GET PEACE-MAKING PROCESS BEGUN IN EARNEST. BHUTTO REJOINED THAT SMALL COUNTRIES LIKE PAKISTAN COULD TALK IN BROAD TERMS ABOUT NEED FOR A JUST PEACE, BUT MAJOR POWERS COULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT. AT THAT POINT I WENT INTO ACCOUNT OF VARIOUS EFFORTS BY USG TO GET BOTH SIDES INTO PEACEMAKING AND SECRET

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NEGOTIATING STAGE SINCE 1967, NOTING HOWEVER OUR BELIEF THAT PEACE COULD REALLY BE MADE ONLY BY THE ARABS AND ISRAELIS THEMSELVES, WE THOUGHT THE PRINCIPLES OF PEACE WERE WELL SET OUT IN UNSC RES 242, AND WE OURSELVES HAD NOT OFFERED ANY PARTICULAR BLUEPRINT ALTHOUGH WE HAD SUGGESTED SOME SPECIFIC WAYS IN WHICH FIRST STEPS TOWARD PEACE COULD BE TAKEN. BHUTTO SAID HE AGREED RES 242 WAS SOUND (HE HAD SAID AS MUCH IN RECENT MESSAGE TO UNSYG) BUT THERE WAS PROBLEM IN ISRAELIS' REFUSAL TO GIVE UP TERRITORY THEY OCCUPIED IN 1967. AGREEING THAT WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES WAS A MAJOR PENDING ISSUE, I SAID USG HAD DECLARED CONSISTENTLY ITS SUPPORT OF PRINCIPLE OF INADMISSIBILITY OF

CONQUEST OF TERRITORY BY FORCE; AT SAME TIME, OTHER
MAJOR PENDING ISSUES UNDER RES 242 INCLUDED THAT OF
"SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES." BHUTTO SAID HE
ACCEPTED PRINCIPLE THAT SOME MINOR TERRITORIAL
ADJUSTMENTS MIGHT BE NEEDED TO ACHIEVE SUCH BOUNDARIES.

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 1492

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EXDIS

5. BHUTTO ASKED ABOUT SOVIET INVOLVEMENT. I NOTED
NIXON-BREZHNEV AGREEMENT DURING WASHINGTON DISCUSSIONS
LAST JUNE ON NEED TO MAINTAIN PEACE. CLAIMING VERY
LITTLE KNOWLEDGE ABOUT CURRENT SITUATION, I SAID SOVIETS
SEEMED RECENTLY TO HAVE BEEN EVACUATING PERSONNEL FROM
SOME ARAB COUNTRIES IN POSSIBLE ANTICIPATION OF OUT-
BREAK OF FIGHTING; THIS WOULD INDICATE THEY WERE TIPPED
OFF IN ADVANCE. ON OTHER HAND, I DID NOT HAVE ANY
INDICATION OF ACTUAL SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN PRESENT
HOSTILITIES ALTHOUGH I STRESSED MY KNOWLEDGE WAS
VERY MEAGER. AT THAT POINT, BHUTTO SURPRISED ME BY
CITING REPORTS FROM PAK AMBASSADORS IN DAMASCUS AND
CAIRO WHICH SUGGESTED HARDER POSSIBILITY IF NOT
PROBABILITY OF ACTIVE SOV PRESENCE. AMBASSADOR IN
DAMASCUS HAD RELAYED UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT SOV
EXPERTS WERE WITH SYRIAN UNITS ON FIGHTING FRONT.
AMBASSADOR IN CAIRO HAD RELAYED VIEW SAID TO BE CURRENT
IN SOME CIRCLES IN CAIRO THAT EGYPTIANS MUST HAVE
HAD EXPERT (SOVIET) ADVICE FOR CROSSING SUEZ. AS FOR
HIMSELF, BHUTTO ADDED, HE THOUGHT SOVS MUST HAVE KNOWN
OF ARAB PLANS TO RESUME FIGHTING AND HAD PROBABLY ACQUIESCED
IN THEM. HE THOUGHT EGYPTIANS, FOR EXAMPLE, MIGHT
HAVE ACTED ENTIRELY ON OWN INITIATIVE IF THEIR
AIM HAD BEEN MERELY TO TAKE CONTROL OF EASTERN SIDE OF
THE CANAL; THAT WOULD HAVE REFLECTED DESIRE TO REOPEN
THE CANAL AND TO REACTIVATE WORLD INTEREST IN SOLUTION
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OF MIDDLE EAST PROBLEM. BUT FACT THAT EGYPTIANS WISH TO PUSH EASTWARD INTO SINAI BEYOND SUEZ INDICATED TO HIM THAT SOVS WERE BEHIND THAT MOVE.

6. BHUTTO EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN THAT "CHAUVINISTIC" ELEMENTS IN PAKISTAN MIGHT BE ENCOURAGED BY LOCAL REPORTS OF ARAB ADVANCES TO PRESS GOP TO REVERSE ITS EFFORTS TO EASE TENSIONS IN SUBCONTINENT. THEY MIGHT TAKE LINE THAT, IF THE ARABS CAN WIN, WHY CAN'T WE (PAKISTANIS)? THEY MIGHT LIKE TO GET GOP TO STOP ITS EFFORTS TOWARDS NORMALIZATION IN SUBCONTINENT. SOME OF THE UNREPENTENT "SWAGGER-STICK CROWD" MIGHT URGE THAT PAKISTAN SEEK REVENGE ON INDIA. BHUTTO MADE THESE REMARKS IN MANNER INDICATING HIS CONTEMPT FOR SUCH "CHAUVINISTS."

7. AT THAT POINT I EXPRESSED VERY STRONG HOPE THAT GOP WOULD NOT ALLOW ITSELF TO BECOME ACTIVELY EMBROILED IN CURRENT MIDDLE EAST FIGHTING. I REFERRED SPECIFICALLY TO PAK PILOTS ATTACHED TO LIBYAN AIR FORCE. BHUTTO QUICKLY RESPONDED THAT HE HAD ALREADY TAKEN STEPS TO REMIND "OUR PEOPLE" OF UNDERSTANDING ON WHICH THEY HAD BEEN SENT TO LIBYA, I.E., THAT THEY WERE UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES TO BECOME INVOLVED IN ANY HOSTILITIES. PAKISTAN ALSO HAD SOME MILITARY ADVISORS IN JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAQ; SAME PRINCIPLE APPLIED TO THEM, AND BHUTTO WAS INTENT ON KEEPING THEM OUT OF THE FIGHTING IF THOSE COUNTRIES SHOULD BECOME INVOLVED IN THE HOSTILITIES. AS FOR LIBYA, IT WAS STILL REFUSING TO COME THROUGH WITH A \$30 MILLION LOAN WHICH HAD BEEN OFFERED BEFORE BHUTTO CAME DOWN FIRMLY LAST YEAR THAT PAK PILOTS WERE TO REFRAIN STRICTLY FROM ANY ACTIVE ENGAGEMENTS ON BEHALF LIBYAN AIR FORCE (AS IN AIRSPACE OVER MEDITERRANEAN WATERS CLAIMED BY LIBYA).

8. CONVERSATION THIS SUBJECT CONCLUDED WITH BHUTTO'S STATEMENT THAT US HAS "OPPORTUNITY" TO SEE THAT CHANCES OF PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT EMERGE FROM PRESENT HOSTILITIES. HE SUGGESTED THERE SHOULD NOT BE INSISTENCE THAT FIGHTING CEASE BEFORE SUCH "OPPORTUNITY" IS AT HAND. (IN CONTEXT OUR DISCUSSION, IT HAD TO BE INFERRED HE MEANT
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THAT THERE SHOULD BE CLEAR TREND TO LIKELY OUTCOME OF FIGHTING BEFORE IT WAS HALTED; AND SINCE HE HAD DOUBTS ABOUT ARAB CAPABILITIES, IT ALSO HAD TO BE INFERRED THAT HE WOULD NOT MIND SEEING THE ISRAELIS GIVE THE EGYPTIANS AND SYRIANS SOME HARD KNOCKS.) IN THIS REGARD BHUTTO URGED THAT, ALTHOUGH USG MIGHT "MAKE NOISE", WE SHOULD "PLAY IT COOL."

SOBER

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